

The Active Consumer

Be A Smart Shopper—Use Coupons

(NAPSA)—Consumers are often amazed to find out that they can save as much as 20 percent on weekly shopping expenses by spending as little as 20 minutes per week clipping coupons. Over the course of a year, this can add up—and with \$800 or \$1,000 extra dollars in your pocket, you can afford to splurge on a luxury item, a vacation, or simply feel better knowing you have drastically reduced your household expenses.

According to the Promotion Marketing Association Coupon Council, almost 80 percent of Americans use coupons and together saved more than \$3 billion last year. It just goes to show, anyone can be a smart shopper—regardless of income or age—as long as they remember to clip coupons!

What do you need to know to be a smart shopper?

- Look for coupons in the newspaper, in magazines, in your mailbox, at the grocery store and with your cash register receipts.

- Keep those scissors nearby as you go through the newspaper, so you can clip as you go.

- Use coupons everywhere—not just at the grocery store. Coupons can be redeemed at many types of stores, including retail mass merchandisers, convenience stores, drug stores and even dollar stores.

- Whatever you want, there is probably a coupon for it. This year saw an increase in coupons available for discounts on a variety of products and services, including apparel, accessories and home electronics.

- Watch for discounts on entertainment, too. Lots of coupons exist for restaurants (even fast-food), movies and other entertainment.

- Watch for Bonus Coupon Days. Many retailers offer bonus coupon savings, which can mean two or three times the coupon face value.

- Keep your coupons organized by category and expiration date. Many wallet-like coupon organizers are available for this purpose, and make the job faster and easier. Keep your organizer with you, either in your car, briefcase or tote bag.

- Use coupons in conjunction with loyalty or frequent shopping cards from your local retailers to maximize savings.

- Coupons can cut your grocery bills and feed the hungry at the same time. Use coupon savings to purchase products as a charitable donation. To learn how to help in Atlanta and California, visit www.cutouthunger.org.

For even more money-saving coupon clip tips, visit www.couponmonth.com.